through the Mediterranean had been absolutely closed to our ships, owing to submarines, though it was hoped to resume traffic in a day or two. I had the warmest sympathy with M. Briand's desire to reinforce our Army in the Balkans, particularly if any prospect should be opened of our using it for an effective thrust against the enemy in that region.

Shipping shortage prevents reinforcement of Salonika

But our shipping had now been very seriously reduced by submarine attacks and was in greater demand than ever for carrying supplies, not only for ourselves but for our Allies. We had at the time no less than 1,200,000 tons of shipping occupied with carrying for the French, and several hundred thousand tons carrying for the Italians. Unless they were prepared to forego the supplies of coal, steel and other commodities which we were shipping for them, we simply could not add to our commitments the task of transporting further forces to Salonika and maintaining them there—certainly not until the submarine crisis had been overcome. We already had more men on that front than either the French or the Italians, and to keep them reinforced with fresh drafts, and provisioned with food, equipment and munitions at the other end of the submarine-infested Mediterranean, was a task of no little difficulty.

Besides, the Salonika Front was still unadapted for

large-scale offensive operations. Little had been done to improve the transport facilities up *Balkan* country from the ports. The roads were *nflcted* deplorably bad. I urged the Italians, therefore, at the Conference, to supply companies of engineers and workmen for making an additional road from Santi Quaranta to Monastir and improving the railway lines, so that there might be a